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The rule of law at the national and international levels

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 12 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter dated 16 October 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/70/445) and the annex thereto, I have the honour to state the following:

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects all baseless and fabricated allegations that have been raised in this letter and during the past several years by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. These fabrications, which have always been put forward without a single piece of evidence, have always been an attempt to distract public opinion from the regrettable violent policies and practices that the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has adopted against peaceful civil protesters, who seek to advance political freedom and equal rights for all citizens in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the brutal crackdown on moderate dissident leaders in that country.

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the situation in Bahrain a domestic issue and regrets that it has been exacerbated as a result of unnecessary foreign military intervention that, coupled with the violent approach by the Government, caused the situation to acquire unprecedented humanitarian, political and security dimensions.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always reiterated that tension, insecurity and instability in the sensitive and important region of the Persian Gulf is detrimental to the interest of all States in the region and, therefore, has always invited the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to adopt a constructive and peaceful approach towards the ongoing crisis in response to the calls by its own people and the members of the international community, taking into account the relevant reports and recommendations at the national and international levels, including the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, established by the Government of Bahrain.

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4. The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to playing a constructive role in the region and has always urged other countries in the region to follow suit through close cooperation among them, free from destructive pressures from outside the region. Iran highly respects the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and believes that the legitimate demands of people and their fundamental human rights and freedoms should not and cannot be suppressed under any pretext. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always invited all parties to the crisis in Bahrain to dialogue and peaceful negotiations and believes that peaceful negotiations at all levels are vital and can in turn contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. At the same time, we invite the Government of Bahrain to halt its unconstructive and unhelpful approach towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and allow for the initiation of a friendly and good neighbourly relationship between the two countries.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 85 and 108.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/70/684

General Assembly

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Agenda items 15 and 116

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Meeting at a special summit at the United Nations in September 2015, world leaders committed themselves to an ambitious global agenda, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", with the overarching Goal of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. All States and all stakeholders recognized their respective responsibilities for the implementation of the Agenda. In paragraph 72 of the Agenda, Governments also emphasized that a robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework would make a vital contribution to implementation, and in paragraph 73, that it would promote accountability to citizens, support active international cooperation in achieving the Agenda and foster exchange of best practices and mutual learning. The present report explores how to put in place a coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review system at the global level, within the mandates outlined in the Agenda. It does not attempt to describe or prescribe how to implement the 2030 Agenda, the primary responsibility for which lies at the national level; nor does it attempt to describe the wide array of possible multilateral support mechanisms to such implementation efforts.

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I. Introduction

1. From Sendai[1] to Addis Ababa[2] and from New York[3] to Paris,[4] 2015 was a momentous year for multilateralism and international policy shaping. Adopted in New York in September 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the ambitious shared vision that will guide our efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development over the next 15 years. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and their accompanying targets are at its heart. The Goals were developed by United Nations Member States in a broad consultative process that included unprecedented engagement with civil society. The broad ownership of the 2030 Agenda must translate into a strong commitment by all stakeholders to implement the Agenda and achieve the Goals.

2. Member States clearly expressed their resolve to buttress the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with a robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent, and integrated follow-up and review of progress (Agenda, para. 72).

3. The follow-up and review framework must carry forward the spirit of partnership and the enthusiastic civil society and business sector engagement that led to the successful creation of the Agenda. It must institutionalize the principles defined in the Agenda and address the new areas, including the resolve to leave no one behind and to tackle climate change, and the aspiration for peaceful societies and effective institutions. It must reflect the integrated nature of the Agenda and be geared towards supporting implementation. It should inspire a multi-stakeholder approach to implementation.

4. The present report was prepared in response to paragraph 90 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In paragraph 90, the Secretary-General is requested, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a report for consideration at the seventieth session of the General Assembly in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which outlines critical milestones towards coherent, efficient, and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. The report should include a proposal on the organizational arrangements for state-led reviews at the forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, including recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines. It should clarify institutional responsibilities and provide guidance on annual themes, on a sequence of thematic reviews, and on options for periodic reviews for the high-level political forum.

5. The present report reflects my analysis and proposals, drawing from the responses of 119 Member States to a questionnaire circulated by the Secretariat.[5]

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[1] Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030 (General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II).

[2] Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015 (resolution 69/313, annex).

[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[4] Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted in December 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

[5] The 119 Member States include members of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Caribbean Community, the European Union, the Group of Seven and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/follow-up).

United Nations system organizations and major groups and other stakeholders also provided their views.

6. My proposals aim to help Member States to ensure that global follow-up and review is anchored in the realities of people's lives and builds on effective reviews at the national and regional levels. They suggest ways to fully use the potential of the new high-level political forum on sustainable development as the central follow-up and review platform. They reflect on how it can rally all international intergovernmental platforms within the United Nations system and beyond around the 2030 Agenda, instil coherence in their work and derive political guidance from their conclusions. My proposals also aim to clarify the respective roles of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other platforms. They stress that we should work on each and every platform to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and reflect the principles of the Agenda. Above all, my proposals start from the premise that whatever we do should be country-led, people-centred, gender-sensitive, pragmatic, open, participatory, and useful to all countries and people.

II. A review system oriented towards supporting national implementation

7. While committing to the systematic follow-up and review of progress at the national, regional and global levels (Agenda, para. 47), Member States have emphasized that the lynchpin of follow-up and review in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals will be the national level.

8. Follow-up and review processes at the global level must complement and support national and regional reviews and be guided by the principles defined in paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda. Those include their voluntary and state-led nature, their respect for national ownership and the Agenda's characteristics, their emphasis on means of implementation, their inclusiveness, their use of existing platforms, and their rigorous, data and evidence-based nature.

9. The ultimate purpose of global follow-up and review is to accelerate progress towards the eradication of poverty and hunger and other Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Working coherently with the existing institutions

10. At the global level, the main building blocks of the review architecture are already in place. This architecture will be centred around the high-level political forum, which will provide political guidance and recommendations on the basis of a global common appraisal of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. The high-level political forum is the culmination of a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level. Its thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, will be supported by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums (Agenda, para. 85). The 2030 Agenda offers an overarching vision and a framework which can truly mobilize and integrate the work of these separate bodies and forums around the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that they work as essential building blocks of a cohesive review system, while respecting their diverse mandates and governance. Building on these

forums will ensure an expert and cohesive, but also efficient system underpinning the high-level political forum.

12. Equally important, the forum, in fulfilling its role, will work coherently with and benefit from the guidance and support of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council under whose auspices it meets.

13. Global action and review are only valuable if they build on national and regional efforts. Regional political, economic and sectoral institutions are thus great sources of expertise and inspiration for following up on the Agenda at all levels. In this regard, the regional commissions can play an important role.

14. In addition, a wealth of organizations and actors outside the United Nations system are planning to review progress in areas related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Provided they are rigorous and independent, they may inform and enrich intergovernmental work within the United Nations.

15. Major groups of civil society and other stakeholders, including business, must participate in all parts of the follow-up and review architecture. The high-level political forum should champion innovative practices to engage non-State actors. People should know about its work and understand and relate to its conclusions.

16. Overall, ensuring effective global review is about determining how existing institutions can embrace the principles of the 2030 Agenda and reinforce each other's work within a common review architecture. It is about ensuring a stronger engagement between States and their people and an inclusive approach to realize the transformations entailed by the Sustainable Development Goals. It is about creating opportunities for identifying success factors, gaps, lessons learned and for reflecting, sharing and mutual learning.

17. The integrated and indivisible nature of the Goals should lead to a review system that promotes a cross-cutting understanding of the significant interlinkages across the Goals and targets. This should foster at the high-level political forum, integrated and holistic perspectives on progress and obstacles, while precluding any single institution or forum from claiming exclusive ownership of or responsibility for the review of a specific goal.

A. High-level political forum on sustainable development

18. The high-level political forum is expected to take a holistic view of implementation. It is tasked with assessing progress, achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries and ensuring that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious (Agenda, para. 82). Member States have emphasized that it should thus draw high-level political attention to gaps or areas where we are lagging behind and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up to accelerate progress on the most important issues, based on good practices and scientific findings.

Meetings under the auspices of the General Assembly and meetings under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

19. The annual meetings of the high-level political forum, held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, should pave the way for its quadrennial

meeting under the auspices of the General Assembly. This means that all 17 Sustainable Development Goals should be reviewed in the forum meeting under the auspices of the Council within a four-year period.

20. At the high-level political forum meeting under General Assembly auspices, Heads of State and Government will then provide political guidance at the highest level on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation (Agenda, para. 87). These meetings will be the moment to review progress in implementing the entire Agenda in a holistic and integrated way and to give political impetus at the highest level to policies and cooperation to accelerate progress and bridge gaps, building on the outcomes of the four preceding annual meetings of the forum. They will also allow for recommitment to the 2030 Agenda and provide directions on how to mobilize the necessary means of implementation overall, drawing from the discussions at the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development of the General Assembly. Importantly, forum meetings under the General Assembly will also be the moment to determine whether there is need for any adjustment to ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious (Agenda, para. 82). Given the importance of such decisions by Heads of State and Government, they should be based on solid evidence and in-depth analysis in the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and the Sustainable Development Goals progress report.

Contributing to reviews at the high-level political forum when meeting under Economic and Social Council auspices

21. Concretely, the annual high-level political forum could typically include four parts: (a) review of overall progress, with the review of the Sustainable Development Goals progress report, national reviews, and regional reviews; (b) review of progress in specific areas, with thematic review on the theme and in-depth reviews of a subset of Sustainable Development Goals; (c) review of Goal 17 and other inputs on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and (d) new and emerging issues and looking to the long term.

Review of overall progress

22. One of the core elements of the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda is voluntary national reviews by the high-level political forum when it meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. As with the forum's thematic reviews of Sustainable Development Goals and its examination of the report on global progress towards the Goals, these reviews will assess progress in implementing the universal goals and targets, including the means of implementation. Their focus should be the whole of the Agenda.

23. Regional reviews will also be conducted and provide the forum with a critical overview of progress and major policy issues in each region. The regional forums on sustainable development have an important role and could help bring together existing review mechanisms. Regional review outcomes would need to be discussed in a part of the high-level political forum dedicated to regional reviews.

24. In addition to the Sustainable Development Goals progress report, the 2030 Agenda defines the *Global Sustainable Development Report* as a tool to inform the high-level political forum and strengthen the science-policy interface (Agenda, para. 83). It will be a critical tool to anchor the regular reviews of the forum in

scientific findings and analysis, enabling it to take a long-term perspective, complementing the Sustainable Development Goals progress report. The high-level political forum will use the progress reviews of Sustainable Development Goals as a scorecard to identify where we are lagging behind.

Review of progress in specific areas

25. The high-level political forum thematic review should also be conducted in a dedicated part of the meeting.

Review of means of implementation related targets and other inputs on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

26. To ensure a holistic approach and build synergies, reviews of means of implementation could be held not only in connection to national and thematic reviews, but also at a dedicated part of the high-level political forum. This part would consider the outcomes of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, while also reviewing progress annually towards means of implementation-related targets.

27. The forum will thus be informed by several forums dedicated to reviewing components of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It will be informed by the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Economic and Social Council financing for development forum (Agenda, para. 86) and the summary of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation. It should also receive the President's summary of the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council, as well as inputs from other relevant forums, such as the infrastructure forum led by the multilateral development banks, and the meetings of the international financial institutions or the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. These forums could provide insights on the situation regarding means of implementation and identify gaps and possible solutions to be further addressed by the forum.

New and emerging issues

28. A critical mandate for the high-level political forum is to address new and emerging issues. This will help to ensure the continued relevance of the Agenda. Member States and other stakeholders could draw the attention of the President of the Economic and Social Council to such new and emerging issues in advance of the forum. The forum itself might also launch further work on new issues to be addressed at its next session.

29. The high-level political forum must look at the impact of today's trends and policy choices on the Sustainable Development Goals 10, 15 or 30 years from now, and serve as the platform for identifying and addressing new and emerging trends, linkages and challenges in a manner that addresses all dimensions of development and that looks to the long term.

30. Currently, a dialogue with executive secretaries of regional commissions and a high-level dialogue with the heads of financial and trade institutions, are held during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. As an option, the Bureau of the Council could consider moving these dialogues to become part of the forum discussions on regional reviews and on means of implementation,

respectively, while preserving the reporting link of regional commissions to the Council. Such an arrangement would enhance the impact of the high-level segment of the Council, which also includes the high-level political forum ministerial days.

31. The high-level political forum could also be informed by and benefit from several specific Economic and Social Council forums covering cross-cutting issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the existing forums on partnerships, youth and others.

32. In addition, a forum for countries in special situations, including small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, could be held immediately prior to the forum, which could review the implications of Sustainable Development Goals progress for the action agendas on countries in special situations. Such a forum could constitute a part of the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council. Attention should also be given to countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

33. To ensure that the high-level political forum gives adequate consideration to vulnerable peoples, the Commission for Social Development, the Human Rights Council and other forums, for example, those on specific population groups, such as migrants or indigenous people, could also contribute to forum discussions through dedicated inputs.

34. The high-level political forum ministerial declaration would capture the essence of the vision and policy recommendations of the multiple platforms, parts, and discussions, as well as lessons learned, and translate them into political guidance on further action. It should also draw critical conclusions from ministerial and other discussions conducted by the forum during the session. It would therefore be necessary to finalize the declaration during the three ministerial days of the forum, so as to benefit from ministerial guidance.

35. In addition to the broad elements provided by the forum's ministerial declaration, it would be important to capture in greater detail the conclusions and possible recommendations emanating from the reviews, as well as possible commitments made with regard to means of implementation and partnerships. This could be done through a high-level political forum summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council. It would serve as proceedings of the discussions of the forum, facilitating follow-up and review in subsequent years and supporting the further development of the format of reviews.

B. General Assembly

36. The General Assembly is the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations. It will be able to take an integrated view of the messages emanating from the high-level political forum, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council and other relevant bodies, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

37. In order to take an integrated approach to the 2030 Agenda, the Main Committees of the General Assembly would translate the findings and broad political guidance of the forum into more detailed high-level guidance on the issues on the agenda of the Assembly, including the specific major United Nations international conferences and summits followed by the Assembly.

38. The General Assembly, supported by the Economic and Social Council, is also the main platform for reviewing the United Nations system's contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. Future quadrennial comprehensive policy reviews of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should not only look at how the system works, but also review its performance in terms of helping Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. This is a major challenge for the United Nations system, as it requires new ways of working and preserving the various elements and overall balance of the Agenda. The Council has the critical role of supporting the Assembly in this regard, through its annual assessment of progress in implementing the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In that vein, the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/70/75-E/2015/55) could support future such reviews, along with the regular report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

39. The General Assembly will also need to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is adequately addressed in its agenda and that it shapes the way in which it conducts its business. While the agenda of the Assembly is broader than the 2030 Agenda, various aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals are addressed in the Assembly's plenary and in all its Main Committees. The President of the General Assembly has indicated his willingness to spearhead a review of the way in which the Assembly addresses the 2030 Agenda, which could be done by the working group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

C. Economic and Social Council

40. As one of the main organs established by the Charter of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council, under the authority of the General Assembly, discharges United Nations functions in the area of international economic and social cooperation and coordinates the work of the United Nations system and its own subsidiary machinery. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 referred to its "key role in achieving a balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development".

41. The integrated nature of the Agenda will require subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to harmonize their work programmes and agendas with the annual theme of the Council, with which the theme of the high-level political forum is in line. This annual theme of the Council provides an opportunity to make system-wide review more coherent. It could be addressed in each segment of the Council in order to ensure that it is reviewed from multiple perspectives. As noted previously, the Council can also provide several important forums in which highly relevant cross-cutting issues to the Sustainable Development Goals can be reviewed, including on means of implementation.

42. Under the guidance of the Economic and Social Council, its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies will need to integrate the 2030 Agenda into their review work, adhering to the principles identified therein and contributing to the high-level political forum as the central follow-up and review platform (Agenda, para. 85). The Council could also request its other subsidiary bodies, including the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and the Committee on

Development Policy, to make expert contributions to the forum. The reporting link of all subsidiary bodies to the Council would be unchanged.

43. The Economic and Social Council also has critical responsibilities in the follow-up to the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development through the new financing for development forum, the science, technology and innovation forum and the Development Cooperation Forum (see paras. 26-27) all of which inform the discussions of Goal 17 at the high-level political forum.

44. The Economic and Social Council could strengthen its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and utilize its operational or humanitarian segments to review development, peace and humanitarian issues as a nexus, thus addressing related aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

D. Functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums

45. The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental and similar bodies and forums will support the high-level political forum thematic reviews of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda, para. 85).

46. An inventory conducted by the United Nations system Technical Support Team[6] showed that many intergovernmental United Nations bodies and forums review progress and discuss policies in specific areas addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the functional and regional commissions and subsidiary bodies of the Council, those include intergovernmental bodies supported by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly, the World Education Forum, the World Health Assembly, the International Labour Conference, the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Committee on World Food Security, the Human Rights Council along with the annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund and numerous other assemblies and treaty bodies.

47. The 2030 Agenda can give new impetus to this network of intergovernmental bodies and forums, providing opportunities to feature their work prominently at the high-level political forum. It will be important for each forum to seize this opportunity, participate in the review of the 2030 Agenda in accordance with its mandate and follow up on guidance provided by the forum with regard to their contribution to its work. It should be understood that contributing to the high-level political forum review does not imply or create a formal reporting link to the forum or modify a forum's mandate or governance. All forums will be invited to contribute to the high-level political forum, with the decision on whether and how to contribute left to those forums.

48. Three important steps are recommended to enable functional commissions and other intergovernmental forums to support the high-level political forum: first, they

[6] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7186Short%20matrix%20-%20revised%2029.5.pdf.

should reflect on the implications of the 2030 Agenda for their respective areas of work, bearing in mind the integrated nature of the Agenda. Second, they should examine their agendas and methods of work to ensure that they are able to respond to requests for voluntary inputs by the high-level political forum as needed and within the scope of their regular meetings. Third, they should reflect on their ability to convene and engage the critical actors relevant to their contributions to the 2030 Agenda, including scientists, local governments, business, and representatives of the most vulnerable persons, as has been done by the Committee on World Food Security. The secretariats of the functional commissions and other intergovernmental forums will play a role in supporting these forums in undertaking these tasks.

49. It would be necessary for the themes of the high-level political forum to be decided well in advance of the beginning of its four-year cycle. This is critical to provide the necessary predictability to the various intergovernmental forums, institutional actors and stakeholders to facilitate timely and effective contributions to the thematic reviews.

50. The thematic reviews of the high-level political forum will help to link the various parts of the United Nations system intergovernmental architecture. It will allow intergovernmental forums to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum on any theme and alert it about emerging issues or gaps. For example, the global and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction could be expected to provide a dedicated contribution to the high-level political forum when it discusses Sustainable Development Goals targets or themes related to disaster risk reduction, and, in doing so, keep track of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework in a more integrated fashion.[7]

51. By including a Goal on climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals bridged the gap that has long existed between the development agenda and action on climate change, while respecting the role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as the platform for climate change negotiations. Consequently, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention could be invited to make a contribution to the high-level political forum review of Sustainable Development Goal 13 and other related goals and targets. Similarly, Goals 14 and 15 are directly relevant to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and Goals 2 and 15 intersect with the remit of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification.

52. While it is important for each forum to have flexibility to decide on its own approach, contributions by intergovernmental forums to the high-level political forum can be in different forms, including that of a negotiated outcome. A summary of the discussions, as one of the options, might also enable the forum to benefit from the review results of these forums and their expertise.

53. It is critical that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls be included throughout global review.

54. Inputs to the high-level political forum might follow a simple template covering: (a) an assessment of areas of progress and setback at the global level;

[7] 2015 *Global Sustainable Development Report*, Chap. 4.

(b) the identification of areas requiring urgent attention; (c) valuable lessons learned; (d) emerging issues; (e) areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required; and (f) policy recommendations and tools to accelerate progress.

55. The various contributions could be assembled and consolidated into a database for open reviewing and commenting. The key messages and findings could then be compiled by the Secretariat through a collaborative process to support the thematic review and also be made available on the database. It will be important to help the forum to derive political guidance from the multiple inputs it will receive. The secretariats of the various United Nations system intergovernmental bodies must work coherently to support effective global review.

E. Regional perspective

56. In the 2030 Agenda, the importance of dialogue and review at the regional and subregional levels was recognized. Important progress has been achieved in various regions on the follow-up and review architecture, including through regional forums on sustainable development convened by the regional commissions. The main benefits of regional review activities must be felt at the level of the region and countries. Regional reviews — peer learning and assessments of progress and policies — will allow for discussions on overall trends, gaps, lessons learned, best practices, and issues specific to the region — whether they relate to means of implementation, the thematic review or others — and boost regional cooperation and partnerships. Where gaps are noted, additional consultations could help to define appropriate responses.

57. Regional reviews supported by the regional commissions, other regional organizations, United Nations system entities and the Global Compact, for example, can provide important inputs to countries of the region as well as to the high-level political forum.

58. There are a number of regions where peer review mechanisms exist. They can provide potential valuable lessons. It is important that the United Nations regional commissions and other regional organizations continue to work closely together and build on each other's work.

59. The outcomes of reviews conducted in regional forums may be provided to the high-level political forum in an aggregated form. Countries that have undergone peer or other reviews at the regional level could be encouraged to use them in their preparation for national reviews at the forum.

IV. Assessments by non-United Nations organizations

60. Many international and regional organizations beyond the United Nations plan to review implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many Member States have recognized their important role, while also pointing to the potential risk of duplicating efforts.

61. Examples include the African Peer Review Mechanism, the peer reviews of the Pacific Island Forum or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development initiative, the peer and other reviews of which already cover many thematic aspects of the 2030 Agenda. The work of such platforms outside the United Nations can strengthen global follow-up and review and reflect the universal nature of the Agenda.

62. While conclusions from those reviews may be provided to the high-level political forum — or regional forums — in an aggregate form or by the countries concerned, it is important to ensure that all reviews fed to the forum are consistent with the principles set out in the 2030 Agenda regarding content, approach, ambition, breadth and rigour of the review of Sustainable Development Goals.

63. A variety of coalitions, non-governmental organizations and think tanks also work at the global and regional levels to collect data and information on trends and policies. Some multi-stakeholder partnerships likewise conduct stock-taking, collect lessons learned and provide feedback, all of which can be useful to the high-level political forum.

V. Ensuring inclusiveness of global reviews

64. Heads of State and Government decided that all reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and would support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.

65. It is critical to engage major groups and other stakeholders throughout the review process, including at the national and subnational level. It will thus be beneficial to the review that Governments ensure inclusiveness and participation through the appropriate mechanisms. Progress in doing so could also be highlighted in national reviews at the high-level political forum.

66. The 2030 Agenda also envisages strong participation of non-State actors in United Nations intergovernmental forums and bodies. The Economic and Social Council system in particular provides a space for multiple development actors to come together to review implementation. The 2030 Agenda, in paragraph 89, also gives a central a role to the high-level political forum in spurring inclusiveness in follow-up and review at the global level. Stakeholders engaged in cutting-edge work — business, scientists, academia, parliamentarians, local governments, youth representatives and other major groups and stakeholders — should find relevance in the work of the high-level political forum and be able to contribute to it. Only by hearing multiple perspectives, ideas and evidence can the forum break new ground.

67. The President of the Council, who also chairs the high-level political forum, should aim to promote innovative ways to operationalize the extensive arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/290 for major groups and other relevant stakeholders to participate in the work of the forum. They should be able to access its documentation and to provide comments and inputs through an online engagement platform as was done during the negotiations on the Agenda and during meetings of the forum. Their input should be actively solicited through calls for evidence and invitations to be presented at the forum. Multi-stakeholder dialogues, such as those held during the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, could be used more frequently within the scope of regular official meetings.

68. Non-governmental organizations, business and other major groups and stakeholders could also be encouraged to announce their commitments for achieving

the Sustainable Development Goals, with measurable milestones and deliverables. Major commitments could be compiled and made available through a database accessible to all and be followed up. Ample space should also be given to non-State actors to organize events before and during the high-level political forum, with links to official meetings.

69. Bearing in mind the principles highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, I encourage countries that carry out voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum to invite civil society and the private sector to engage in their preparations, including in national and subnational reviews.

70. The United Nations resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams, and the United Nations development system as a whole, stand ready to support national implementation.

VI. Ensuring that high quality data supports the reviews

71. The annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the Sustainable Development Goals will be produced in cooperation with the United Nations system based on the global indicator framework. Building on the model of progress reports on the Millennium Development Goals, it will depict and analyse trends in a factual manner, drawing on already existing in-depth technical analysis and data sets, while also clearly highlighting aspects that deserve the attention of the high-level political forum.

72. Regarding financing for development, the inter-agency task force will prepare its annual report on progress in implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will advise the intergovernmental follow-up thereto on progress, implementation gaps and recommendations for corrective action, while taking into consideration the national and regional dimensions.

73. The availability and access to high quality data is essential to measuring and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is necessary to follow up the relevant provisions on data in the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Statistical Commission makes important recommendations in this regard. Ideas can also be drawn from the 2014 report of the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, entitled "A world that counts: mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development". The high-level political forum will need to provide adequate space for assessing whether the necessary measures are in place to produce the data necessary to underpin the review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

VII. Ensuring ambition and impact of high-level political forum voluntary national reviews

A. National and subnational reviews

74. The 2030 Agenda, in paragraph 79, encourages Member States to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels

which are country-led and country-driven. The success of the review system will ultimately be determined by its ability to help translate the Agenda into a nationally owned vision and objectives, leading to transformative action. This can only happen if reviews building on existing structures draw on contributions from all stakeholder groups.

75. The 2030 Agenda does not stipulate a frequency for the national and subnational reviews. However, more frequent reviews, grounded in a national context, will support stronger national engagement. The United Nations system, including through its regional commissions and country teams, stands ready to provide coherent support to the conduct of national reviews, including for strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices, data systems and evaluation bodies.

76. Such regular national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the voluntary national reviews by the high-level political forum.

B. Incentives for countries to participate in voluntary national reviews by the high-level political forum

77. Above all, high-level political forum voluntary national reviews must be geared towards accelerating implementation. They aim to enable mutual learning across countries and regions and help all countries, in particular those being reviewed, to enhance their national policies and institutional frameworks and mobilize necessary support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The value of a unified and universal approach to such reviews can be seen in the World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review Mechanism and the universal periodic review in the area of human rights.[8] Those also provide useful insights on how to organize and support voluntary universal reviews.

78. Country-level reviews and preparations are, in and of themselves, useful, as they can reveal challenges at the domestic level and enhance cooperation across ministries and institutions. They can help to reduce silos and identify gaps and areas where support is needed. Some Member States see an opportunity for the high-level political forum to be a "matchmaking market place" and the Secretariat is ready to support the necessary arrangements.[9]

C. Periodicity and number of voluntary national reviews by the high-level political forum

79. The 2030 Agenda does not provide details on the periodicity of voluntary national reviews. Experiences from existing mechanisms suggest that it is important to have regular reviews in order to enable all countries to learn from the process

[8] Ghosh, A. (2010) "Developing Countries in the WTO Trade Review Mechanism", *World Trade Review* 9:3, pp. 419-455.

[9] Economic and Social Council (2015), Summary of the President of the Economic and Social Council on the high-level segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council and high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council.

over time and to identify trends, patterns and lessons learned. As the 2030 Agenda is a universal agenda, all countries would be expected to regularly carry out reviews at the high-level political forum.

80. Each country could thus consider carrying out up to two voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum between now and 2030. Those reviews will be timed by countries so that they are most useful to their own national policymaking process. Reviews at each session of the forum will need to strive for an equitable geographical distribution of countries and include countries at different stages of development, including countries in special situations and in post-conflict situations.

81. Regional reviews can help to keep track of how the conclusions of the high-level political forum reviews are being followed up. Conducting national reviews at the forum itself will allow an interregional exchange of experiences.

D. Featuring and discussing voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum

82. Given the limited time allocated to its meetings, the high-level political forum will not be able to listen to a long series of comprehensive presentations on national reviews. With this in mind, some Member States have suggested that as an alternative, comprehensive reviews be synthesized ahead of the forum's session.

83. It will thus be important to give guidance to the ministers of the volunteering countries presenting their reviews at the formal meeting of the high-level political forum. Presentations should have a time limit. They could highlight two or three good practices identified by their country-level review; two or three major challenges currently being faced by their country in implementing the Agenda and any lessons learned in trying to address them; two or three areas in which it needs to hear about other countries' good practices; and two or three areas in which it needs support from other countries and actors in terms of finance, capacity-building, technology, or partnerships. At the end of the forum, each minister could outline the main messages and recommendations that his or her country took from the discussions and the next steps it intends to take. On the margins of the forum, or during informal preparatory meetings, volunteering countries would be able to showcase their reviews at dedicated workshops discussing also prospective partnerships and cooperation to address key challenges in implementation.

84. Volunteering countries should also be able to present a more focused written national report highlighting the conclusions and main messages of their national review of progress. The report could be based on a voluntary template, including the country's Sustainable Development Goals statistical annex.

E. Building on existing mechanisms

85. The 2030 Agenda cautions against overburdening countries with the national reviews, especially those countries with limited capacities and resources. Member States are already subject to reporting obligations in many areas related to the Sustainable Development Goals, both to United Nations bodies — such as the Human Rights Council, treaty monitoring bodies and specialized agencies — and

non-United Nations bodies.[10,11] The follow-up and review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should build on such existing reporting mechanisms as recommended by the 2030 Agenda. Fostering coordination at the domestic, regional and global level is therefore crucial.

86. The Secretariat intends to develop an online platform to support and document the reviews of the high-level political forum. The webcast, documents and content of the forum's voluntary national reviews could be made available, along with the reports that countries have submitted to other reporting mechanisms. Countries would be able to upload summaries of their national and subnational reviews, related information, documents, comments or requests for advice. The platform will also highlight areas in which countries seek support in the form of resources, technology transfer, capacity development or partnerships, as well as record commitments made to respond to those needs. There could be a related dedicated space for major groups and other stakeholders to submit comments through a moderator from the Secretariat and/or major groups.

F. Follow-up to national reviews at the high-level policy forum

87. There are various views among Member States as to whether national reviews should lead to an outcome beyond the general guidance reflected in the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum. The President, in his summary of the discussion of the forum, could capture the key messages from the discussions on national reviews at the forum, as well as at its preparatory meetings. He could highlight the lessons learned and best practices, emerging trends and innovations, outstanding challenges and gaps, conclusions and recommendations, areas requiring support, commitments made by countries or other actors with regard to offering support as well as the next steps outlined by each country being reviewed.

88. When presenting for the second time at the high-level political forum, and/or when conducting a review at the regional level, countries could refer to the main conclusions identified at their first forum review. The follow-up and review process should be seen as a cycle through which States continuously review national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, learn and mobilize support and advice through regular reporting at regional and global levels, and update their implementation strategies.

[10] These include, for example, national reports that countries submit to the universal periodic review to the Human Rights Council; the Human Rights Committee; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Basel Convention on Waste and to the International Labour Organization's supervisory mechanisms on the application of International Labour Standards.

[11] For example, trade policy reviews at World Trade Organization, African Union peer reviews at regional level.

G. Recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines

89. Experiences from existing review mechanisms show that, where there is limited comparability between reviews of different countries, it is difficult to aggregate lessons from the reviews. Voluntary common reporting guidelines may prove helpful to allow for comparability, enabling a discussion of good practices and the tracking of global trends. They should also ensure flexibility, as countries' capacities vary, and reviews must be State-led and State-owned.

90. The guidelines should uphold the principles identified in paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda and aim to support the high-level political forum in addressing achievements and progress, gaps and challenges, and emerging trends.

91. Above all, such reporting guidelines should not become a cap on the ambition of countries. Each country is encouraged to champion innovative, ambitious and inclusive approaches to these reviews. For example, small groups of countries could volunteer for championing voluntary peer reviews starting in July 2016, building on existing arrangements and practices.

VIII. Annual theme of the high-level political forum and sequence of thematic reviews over the four-year cycle

92. In its resolution 67/290, the General Assembly decided that, when meeting under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the high-level political forum would have a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda. In practice, the usual breadth of Council themes leaves ample room to find a theme for the forum that addresses specific components or characteristics of the 2030 Agenda and the three dimensions of sustainable development. For example, in 2015-2016, the annual Council theme is "implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to result".

93. Examples of such possible high-level political forum themes provided by Member States included "governance for sustainable development: a means and an end"; "empowering women and girls for sustainable development"; "integrating sustainable development into plans and processes"; "giving effect to the 2030 Agenda: eradication of poverty in all its form and dimensions"; "integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development"; "strengthening and renewal of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development"; "science and technology and productive diversification for sustainable development"; and "cross-cutting enablers of sustainable development: culture and the rule of law". Some also suggested organizing the work programme around People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships, as contained in the 2030 Agenda.

94. Other possible cross-cutting themes could also relate to people in protracted crises, disaster prevention through risk management, climate change adaptation, the rights of children and youth, etc.

95. The 2030 Agenda decided that the high-level political forum would carry out thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues. There are various options for reviewing the Goals.

96. A first option is, in any given year, to have a comprehensive review of all the Goals through the lens of the theme. Such an option will assist in examining the linkages and synergies among the Goals and targets. This, however, may restrict the depth of the treatment of the Goals during the meeting of the high-level political forum, given the number of meeting days.

97. As a second option, the forum could look not only at all 17 Goals through the lens of the theme for that year, but also carry out an in-depth Goal-by-Goal review of a few Sustainable Development Goals.

98. This would allow thematic reviews to cover all Sustainable Development Goals within four years, in preparation for the comprehensive review to be conducted at the high-level political forum under the General Assembly. The choice of goals for a given year would not be mutually exclusive, and Member States could bring other Goals and targets into the discussions.

99. The following table provides illustrative examples for a possible sequence of broad cross-cutting themes and thematic reviews that the high-level political forum could cover over a period of four years when meeting under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, building up to the comprehensive review of all the Sustainable Development Goals under the auspices of the General Assembly. It is based on the proposal of the President of the Council that the theme of the forum for 2016 be "ensuring that no one is left behind", and that Goals 1, 6, 8, 10 and 17 be selected for thematic reviews. It should be noted in this regard that the theme and focus for the 2016 high-level political forum will be decided after the present report is issued.

100. Under each option, Goal 17 would be addressed every year. The subsets of Goals in the two examples were chosen to echo the theme for that year as much as possible, bearing in mind that the themes chosen for the high-level political forum would, in essence, cut across all the Sustainable Development Goals.

	2016	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*
Theme of the high-level political forum	Ensuring that no one is left behind	Ensuring food security on a safe planet by 2030	Making cities sustainable and building productive capacities	Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness: peaceful and inclusive societies, human capital development, and gender equality
Suggested non-exclusive subset of Goals for (thematic review)	Goals 1, 6, 8, 10 Goal 17	Goals 2, 13, 14, 15 Goal 17	Goals 7, 9, 11, 12 Goal 17	Goals 3, 4, 5, 16 Goal 17
Comment on the choice of Goals for review		The subset would address the theme through the angle of food security, climate change, terrestrial ecosystems and oceans	The subset would look at the linkages between energy, cities, and industrialization, and sustainable patterns of consumption and production	The subset would look at the relationships between peaceful and inclusive societies, gender equality, education and health

101. The themes and thematic reviews for the next high-level political forum cycle should: (a) enable the forum to deliver on its mandated functions; (b) support substantive policy discussions in order to enable the forum to provide effective policy guidance, taking into account exchange of experience and lessons learned; (c) inspire and enable United Nations organizations to contribute substantially to follow-up and review; and (d) incentivize high-level representation from various sectors at the forum each year, from different policy areas. The order of the themes/Sustainable Development Goal subsets can be chosen, for example, to contribute to the preparation or follow-up of a major United Nations conference or to use data recently generated by a review mechanism.

IX. Link between the annual theme of the high-level political forum and the theme of the Economic and Social Council

102. Ensuring that the theme of the high-level political forum is in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Economic and Social Council, as mandated, is an important way to ensure coherence and complementarity in their work.[12]

103. A possible approach would be for the forum to focus on reviewing progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, as mandated in the 2030 Agenda, bringing together the components of the 2030 Agenda and providing high-level political guidance. The Council, for its part, could build on its mandates, institutional strengths and authority and examine how the United Nations development system can be mobilized and transformed in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as part of its operational segment's work on the follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and on the long-term positioning of the United Nations system, as well as in other segments.

104. Ensuring that the high-level political forum and the Economic and Social Council address implementation from mutually complementary angles and closely align their thematic focus, along with ensuring predictability through the early adoption of a four-year programme of work, will facilitate the organization of work of functional commissions and other bodies in support of the 2030 Agenda.

X. Reporting by major groups, other stakeholders and partnerships

105. In an innovative provision of the 2030 Agenda (para. 89), major groups and other relevant stakeholders were called upon to report on their contribution to implementation. That provision is particularly important for the voluntary reporting and accountability by non-governmental actors who manage significant resources or assets, and therefore play an important role in the achievement of individual Sustainable Development Goals and targets on the ground. These could include, for example, business, non-governmental organizations, specific partnerships and alliances, large cities, and others. To ensure comparability, reports from such stakeholders could build on a voluntary template based on existing tools and models.

[12] General Assembly resolution 67/290, para. 7 (c).

106. Reporting on partnerships and voluntary commitments for sustainable development, including to the high-level political forum, also needs to be strengthened to enhance visibility of successful examples and foster accountability. Online platforms could play a unique role in this endeavour. The United Nations Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals online platform will be further developed to keep track of how partnerships are delivering on their commitments to support implementation. The Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework, recently created by the General Assembly, is piloting an innovative approach to overseeing how partnerships are being held accountable and deliver on their commitments.[13]

107. The partnership forum of the Economic and Social Council can serve as the platform for drawing attention to areas requiring policy attention in regard to partnerships' contribution to implementation. Reviews of partnerships engaging the United Nations system will help to promote accountability, build trust and transparency of partnership efforts and ensure that the United Nations values and mandates are preserved.

108. Voluntary reports by non-governmental actors and partnerships to the high-level political forum could be supplemented by a more general report on the major group or other stakeholder's aggregated contribution in a specific focus area. Such a report could, for example, be prepared by the Global Compact in the case of business. These various reports could be considered by the forum during a dedicated multi-stakeholder session. Opportunities could also be created on the margin of the forum for further reporting. This would be in addition to the position papers that major groups and other stakeholder constituencies submit to the forum annually.

XI. Milestones and the way forward

109. The recommendations below may help the General Assembly in considering further steps to ensure coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.

110. Based on the above options, the General Assembly could:

Theme and thematic reviews

1. Decide on the themes for the meetings of the high-level political forum held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in 2017, 2018 and 2019, leading to a holistic review of progress in implementing the Agenda at the meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2019;

2. Decide on a sequence of thematic reviews for the same period that support the annual themes of the high-level political forum, with Sustainable Development Goal 17 reviewed every year;

3. Request the Economic and Social Council to decide on its annual themes for these same years, bearing in mind the link with the theme of the high-level political forum;

[13] General Assembly resolution 70/202.

High-level political forum voluntary national reviews

4. Encourage all Member States to volunteer to carry out voluntary national reviews by the high-level political forum aiming for at least twice by 2030. Reviews at the regional level may provide the opportunity to prepare and follow up on forum national reviews;

5. Encourage the high-level political forum to adopt innovative organizational arrangements for its national reviews, bearing in mind the principles defined in the 2030 Agenda. Encourage Member States to support the convening of (ad hoc, informal) meetings to prepare the review and presentations at the forum, including through financial contributions;

6. Encourage all countries to champion inclusive and rigorous approaches to high-level political forum reviews, including where appropriate, conducting peer reviews and reviews among groups of countries facing similar situations, taking into account existing arrangements and practices;

7. Invite the President of the Economic and Social Council to prepare, in consultations with Member States, a summary of the discussions of the high-level political forum meetings including an account of the discussions on follow-up and review;

8. Request the Secretary-General to further develop voluntary guidelines for the national reviews at the high-level political forum, based on the principles outlined in the 2030 Agenda and the elements contained in the annex to the present report, and to continue to update those guidelines in the light of experience gained;

9. Request the United Nations system to support countries conducting reviews at the high-level political forum upon request;

Work of the General Assembly

10. Decide to review its working methods and agenda to reflect the approaches and priorities of the 2030 Agenda, through its ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly;

11. Decide, as part of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, to review United Nations system support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda based on the existing reports of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and on mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations;

Work of the Economic and Social Council

12. Call upon the Economic and Social Council to ensure that its subsidiary bodies reflect on the implications of the Agenda for their work and contribute to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a coherent, effective and inclusive manner, consistent with the principles established in Agenda 2030, and that they provide adequate contributions to the global high-level political forum reviews;

13. Invite the Economic and Social Council to review the calendar of conferences to ensure that it allows the various intergovernmental bodies to contribute to high-level political forum review;

14. Invite the Economic and Social Council to hold its Development Cooperation Forum prior to the meeting of the high-level political forum to facilitate its contribution to the high-level political forum;

Functional commissions, and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, including those convened by specialized agencies

15. Call upon functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums (a) to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (b) to this end, to review their working methods and agendas in order to ensure that they address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within their respective area of expertise and mandate; and (c) to enhance the engagement of non-State actors in their work and ensure that all relevant actors have the opportunity to contribute;

16. Note that no single institution or forum can claim exclusive ownership of or responsibility for the review of a specific goal. Note also that contributing to the high-level political forum thematic reviews does not imply or create any formal reporting link to the high-level political forum nor does it modify a forum's mandate or governance;

Follow-up to conferences on countries in special situation

17. Invite the Economic and Social Council, as part of its integration segment, to hold a forum dedicated to reviewing the impact of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for countries in special situation;

Regional reviews

18. Invite the regional commissions, guided by their Member States, to consider a common format for conveying the results of the regional forums on sustainable development to the high-level political forum;

19. Invite regional commissions to report on how they could best support regional reviews;

Non-United Nations organizations

20. Invite non-United Nations intergovernmental regional and international organizations to consider contributing to follow-up and review at the high-level political forum;

21. Invite the Secretary-General, in preparing his reports for the high-level political forum, to take into account assessments and conclusions from reviews conducted by relevant non-United Nations organizations;

22. Invite countries carrying out reviews in such platforms to use them in their preparations for national reviews at the high-level political forum;

Major groups and other stakeholders and partnerships

23. Welcome the many reviews of progress in specific areas of the 2030 Agenda undertaken by think tanks, civil society and other organizations, scientists and partnership initiatives, such as the Global Compact, drawing attention to the principles defined in paragraph 74 of the Agenda;

24. Call upon major groups and other stakeholders to continue reviewing implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda at all levels;

25. Invite Member States to create the necessary opportunities and modalities for their engagement in State-led reviews and preparations and conduct of review and follow-up at the high-level political forum;

26. Encourage the private sector and civil society to inform the United Nations of their commitments to implement the Sustainable Development Goals as part of their contributions to follow-up and review;

27. Invite major groups and other stakeholders to organize themselves and volunteer to carry out comparable rigorous reviews at the high-level political forum on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to report regularly to the forum;

Way forward

28. Decide to review progress in implementing the present resolution and General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational modalities of the high-level political forum at its seventy-fourth session, instead of at its seventy-third session, in order to benefit from lessons learned from the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum held under the auspices of the General Assembly.

Annex

Proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum

In the 2030 Agenda, Member States decided that the high-level political forum, when it meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, shall carry out regular voluntary reviews. As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the Agenda, those reviews will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant United Nations entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. They shall be State-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. They shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. In paragraph 84 of the Agenda, Member States are also encouraged to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels which are country-led and country-driven. Voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum will likely build on such reviews.

The following components are suggested as a way to help countries to frame the preparations for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum, bearing in mind that each country will decide on the scope of their review and the format in which they want to present their findings.

The expectation is that each country being reviewed may present a focused report to the high-level political forum and make brief presentations during its meeting.

1. **Opening statement.** An opening statement by the Head of State or Government, a Minister or other high-ranking Government official could highlight the key messages from the review and touch on critical issues in implementation of sustainable development that the country wishes to highlight.

2. **Summary.** A one-to-two page synthesis of the process and findings of the review highlighting two or three good practices the country wishes to share, two or three lessons it has learned in trying to accelerate implementation, two or three challenges on which it wishes to hear about other countries' good practices and two or three areas where it would need support in terms of finance, capacity-building, technology, partnerships etc.

3. **Introduction.** The context and objectives of the review could be presented here. The introduction may briefly describe key features of the country context as it pertains to the 2030 Agenda, with a discussion of national priorities and targets for sustainable development and their relation to the Sustainable Development Goals, and a discussion of critical challenges.

4. **Methodology and process for preparation of the review.** This section may discuss the methodology that was adopted for the review, including its scope, depth and limitations. Information on the process for preparation of the national review may be presented, including, for example, how different levels and sectors of Government contributed to the review, whether parliaments were engaged, whether national evaluation/oversight institutions contributed, how stakeholders from civil society, academia and the business sector were involved, which consultations took place, and possibly whether another Member State or institutions contributed to the review, etc. Lastly, the country may indicate what support it received. The sources

used for the review may be discussed. This could include, as per paragraph 74 (f) of the 2030 Agenda, how existing platforms and processes have been built on, as well as how existing national reports have been used in the process.

5. **Policy and enabling environment.**

(a) **Creating ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals.** The review could outline efforts made towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the Goals and targets, including national and local government, legislative bodies, the public, civil society and the private sector. It could indicate how it is planned to keep the Goals under review at the national level and, including the possible dissemination of reviews and their findings.

(b) **Incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks.** The review could outline critical initiatives that the country has undertaken to adapt the Sustainable Development Goals and targets to its national circumstances, and to advance their implementation. It may describe national efforts made to integrate the Goals into the country's legislation, policies, plans and programmes, including the sustainable development strategy, if there is one. The review could indicate the main challenges and difficulties experienced in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. It could also highlight additional goals, beyond the Goals, which are national priorities. Countries could consider referring to major efforts undertaken by local authorities and non-State actors to implement the Goals, including partnerships.

(c) **Integration of the three dimensions.** The review might discuss how the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are being integrated and how sustainable development policies are being designed and implemented to reflect such integration. The review could also assess how other principles of the 2030 Agenda, for example, leaving no one behind, have been mainstreamed in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

(d) **Goals and targets.** The review may provide brief information on progress and the status of all Sustainable Development Goals, and critical difficulties encountered in reaching them, making reference, when appropriate, to data provided in the statistical annex (see sect. 8 below). The review may indicate whether a baseline for the Goals has been defined and remaining obstacles to doing so. The review may also provide a more in-depth analysis on a few selected Goals and targets. Those may be chosen by the country in the light of its priorities but also because they were tackled through innovative policies, are relevant to other Member States, and can be addressed in an international context. The discussion could focus on trends, successes, challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learned, and describe what actions have been taken to address existing gaps and challenges. It could support the identification of gaps, solutions, best practices and areas requiring advice and support. The review may examine the agreed global indicators for those goals and targets identified as priorities. Countries may choose to refer to complementary national and regional indicators.

(e) **Thematic analysis.** As appropriate for the country, the review could include an analysis of progress and initiatives related to the high-level political forum's thematic focus for that year.

(f) **Institutional mechanisms.** The review could provide information on how the country has adapted its institutional framework in order to implement the

2030 Agenda. This could include information on how the views of different ministries, agencies, levels of government and non-governmental stakeholders are taken into account and on the institution in charge of coordination and integration. The review could consider highlighting efforts to mobilize institutions around the Sustainable Development Goals, improve their functioning, and promote change. Information may also be provided on how responsibility is allocated among various levels of Government (national, subnational and local) for coherent implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. It would be useful to highlight how the country intends to review progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including possible plans regarding the conduct of national reviews.

6. **Means of implementation.** Based on the above challenges and trends highlighted, the review may discuss how means of implementation are mobilized, what difficulties this process faces, and what additional resources are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, including in terms of financing, capacity development needs, including for data and statistics knowledge-sharing, technology and partnerships.

7. **Next steps.** The review could outline what steps the country is taking or planning to take to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

8. **Statistical annex.** Countries may include an annex with data, using the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators to be proposed by the Statistical Commission as a starting point and adding priority indicators identified at the regional and national levels. They may highlight whether statistics were collected from the national statistical system and pinpoint major gaps in official statistics on indicators.

9. **Conclusion.** The section may present a summary of the analysis, findings and policy implications. It may discuss new or emerging issues identified by the review. Lastly, the country may indicate what lessons it has learned from the review process, what support it would need in the future for preparing such reviews and any adjustment it believes should be made to the guidelines to ensure that they are useful.

10. The report could have a link to more in-depth national reports and reviews through the dedicated United Nations Secretariat website.